

than that of Charles the Bold, was a well-equipped force, and proved its efficiency in his French wars. The exigencies of policy forced him, as they had forced his father, to summon the Estates, general and provincial, more frequently than he liked, but they were not allowed to control that policy or encroach on the administration. They merely acted the part of paymaster of his imperial schemes, and though they took the opportunity to bargain for the redress of grievances, and succeeded in squeezing at least an occasional accommodation, they were not permitted to exercise the rights stipulated in the "Groote Privilegie." When not summoned to pay for the emperor's "world" policy, their sessions were merely ornamental, /.*, when a governor-general was instituted, or Philip presented to his future subjects, or the enfeebled emperor abdicated in his favour. "The Government," says Professor Blok, "summoned them when it considered their presence necessary in its own interest, and although Charles sometimes made it appear as though he would take no important measure without their help, the States-General knew only too well that the sovereign assembled them only in the hope of obtaining relief from the eternal money stress in which he might be involved."

The autocrat might condescend to bargain, through his representative, for subsidies ; he would not suffer anything in the nature of popular interference. He kept a tight rein on the restive Flemish cities that had given his ancestors so much trouble. He had refused at the beginning of his reign to recognise the "liberties" which Ghent claimed in virtue of the "Groote Privilegie/" and the "Calf Skin," or document issued on that occasion, denounced heavy punishment against all who should assert them. Ghent accordingly bore a grudge against its ruler, in spite of the fact that it was the city of his birth, and in 1536 it refused its quota to a large subsidy granted by a majority of the members of the provincial Estates of Flanders in aid of the war against Francis I., though it offered to send a contingent to the imperial army. It appealed in vain to its ancient charter. Charles insisted on submission ; the Queen-Regent Mary imprisoned all Ghenters caught in Brabant; and the old defiant spirit of the populace burst out once more in revolt. The gilds deposed the magistrates, and took posses-